



Ecological Restoration Institute

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Forest Service Awards Ecological Restoration Institute \$1 Million For Forest Restoration Work

Flagstaff, Ariz.--The Forest Service has awarded \$1 million to the Ecological Restoration Institute at Northern Arizona University to continue building upon the scientific knowledge of ponderosa pine ecosystems in the effort to restore millions of acres of degraded forests.

"The work of the ERI brings solid research to help solve a major issue confronting our community and the state of Arizona," said NAU President John Haeger. "This unique opportunity to continue and expand the important work of the ERI is because of the hard work of Senator Jon Kyl and Representative Rick Renzi."

Rodger Zanotto, Coconino National Forest stewardship staff officer, said there is potential for some of the money to be used to identify important places in the forest for management on a landscape scale, places that include endangered species habitat, watersheds and old growth.

"We recognize and support the need for processes that get at large, landscape-scale assessments, and this is one of those," said Zanotto. "We really look forward to continuing our relationship with the ERI in this endeavor."

ERI director W. Wallace Covington also credited Kyl and Renzi for their leadership in bringing attention to the forest health crisis and attracting resources to help save ecosystems on the brink of collapse.

"We have an opportunity to do restoration right, and the ERI provides the science to get us there," said Kyl.

"The work of Wally Covington and his talented team at the Ecological Restoration Institute is a source of pride for northern Arizona. I am pleased to assist and particularly promote the work of the Ecological Restoration Institute on restoration-based fuel treatments," said Renzi. "This work is critical to protecting our communities and watersheds by reducing the risk of catastrophic wildfire."

ERI researchers are studying the many parts of the ponderosa pine ecosystem and how they respond to thinning and prescribed burning.

"We don't know everything and we're never going to know everything, but we've got enough knowledge to know that we've got to get to work with restoration projects now. With adaptive management, we can monitor and study the effects of restoration efforts and continue to improve our treatments," said Covington.

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